1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

843 The villagers believe that pregnancy lasts ten lunar months and is signalled by the initial interruption of the menstrual cycle. It is rare [759] for a village woman to see a doctor at all during her pregnancy. The villagers consider it unnecessary and say that only the rich people go to a doctor. Even though there is a government-run health center in the [743] *hsiang* which offers some pre-natal care, modesty prevents village women from visiting the clinic although the excuse they give is that they do not have the time.

The expectant mother receives no special care during pregnancy; she eats no special foods and goes about her household and field tasks as usual. The women fear that if they eat special foods the baby may get too big and that the delivery will be difficult and dangerous. They [292] wear no special maternity clothes, but wear either larger and fuller skirts or leave the top buttons of their regular skirts open. During the last month of pregnancy and the first month and a half after the birth, the parents abstain from sexual intercourse. This, the villagers explain, is for the protection of the mother's health.

844 759 178 Today, most village women employ a midwife at the birth of their first child. Midwives first began to be used about twenty years ago, but "then it was only rich people." The regular use of a midwife by ordinary villagers has been common only since the postwar period or the late 1940's. It is interesting that one of the important advantages of having a midwife, according to a group of village women, is that "If [217] we call a midwife, it is easier to register the baby in the Hsiang Public Office since the midwife will then write out the certificate of birth. Othewise a birth certificate must be obtained through the village mayor."

Previously, the older women of the family delivered all babies. Today, these same women may be present to assist the midwife at the time a first child is born, and they usually assist in the delivery of subsequent children when a midwife has not been called. The husband is not present when his wife gives birth.

844 759 465 The midwife who works at the Pu Yen Hsiang Health Center is usually called to Hsin Hsing village. She has been trained by attending several classes for midwives. "She charges NT $30–40 [about US $1] for a normal delivery, or more if she has to give an injection to stop excessive bleeding." The midwife makes two house visits, one at the time of the birth and the second when she washes the baby on the third day after the birth. When the child is born, the midwife applies [757] a silver nitrate solution to the eyes only if it appears that there might be something wrong.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Taiwan AD6

realize the limitations of his own medical knowledge and so recommend that his patient seek medical care in the hospital.

Besides these hospitals, the government has established a clinic or public health center in each district. The center in Pu Yen Hsiang has usually been understaffed or lacking a doctor entirely for long periods of time thus making it impossible for villagers to be sure they can obtain treatment at the center. The result has been that since some villagers wasted time going to the center without receiving treatment, most have come to ignore it completely.

The advent of modern drugs has also helped improve health conditions in the local area. Western-style doctors practicing in the area utilize a great many drugs in treating illness. Penicillin is now so plentiful and inexpensive that most of them are almost automatically expected to administer the drug to their patients. Indeed, the drug has become so well known in recent years and is so readily obtainable in Lukang drug stores that it is not unusual for ordinary villagers to buy it and administer it with a hypodermic needle to their own family members or, more often, to a sick pig. The drug stores in Lukang and other towns and cities which sell penicillin and other Western drugs also usually have a counter in the shop which features Chinese herbal and root medicines. These are still used by many Taiwanese as well as mainlanders.

In addition to the drugs or antibiotics, village families keep various kinds of Western-style patent medicines in the house for treating stomach upsets, headaches, colds, backaches, and so on. These are left with them on consignment by traveling medicine merchants. The medicines are separately wrapped and placed in a kit or bag, and every few months the peddler comes through the village, examines the contents of each bag, collects for what medicine has been used, and replenishes the supply. Many village families have several medicine bags on hand, each supplied by a different company.

A few times a year medicine shows featuring music, comedians, and even snake charmers, also visit the villages in the area. The companies which sponsor these shows sell two or three medicines for special illnesses. Such groups usually draw great village crowds, and their sales are large.

However, in spite of all the improved medical facilities available and the somewhat better sanitation practiced in the local area, there is a high prevalence of disease. Skin diseases are common, especially among children, and intestinal parasites plague both young and old. Trachoma is not uncommon, but the villagers do little to counter it. The disease usually strikes older villagers who are unwilling to spend the time and money necessary to obtain proper treatment. One trachoma victim, a woman of about forty, stated that although she

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

knew she would eventually go blind, "by that time my children will be grown and able to take care of me." In the interim she would not take the time nor spend the money to obtain treatment.

There are several reasons for the high rate of intestinal and parasitic diseases. Although the villagers are aware that water should be boiled before drinking, they actually merely heat it. At the same time they court danger by buying drinks from sidewalk vendors in town. Facilities for washing dishes and other utensils are limited; much of it is done in the nearby pond which serves as the laundry and a bathing place for buffalo as well. Intestinal diseases are also caused by eating raw vegetables which were fertilized with human excrement.

These disorders common in the village do not usually cause alarm. When a familiar illness strikes, the patient may be given some patent or herbal medicine and the illness allowed to run its course. Childhood diseases are common and produce little anxiety. However, there is a fear of diseases whose origin is poorly understood, which produce curious symptoms, and for which no cures are known. When one of these illnesses strikes, a Western-style doctor is called in to administer penicillin or some other drug. The general feeling is that Western medicines, if they are appropriate for the illness, effect fast cures. While many villagers insist that Chinese medicines are just as effective if not more so in the long run, in that they produce a more permanent cure, they readily admit that Chinese medicines are slower to work than Western ones. If the Western medicines fail to help and the patient does not seem to recover quickly enough, or if the illness is very unusual, the villagers conclude that the disorder is caused by some supernatural agent and must be dealt with by magical means. (A detailed discussion of supernatural explanations for illness and the remedies used to cure them is found in Chapter 8.) Most of the diseases prevalent locally are not fatal, and old age seems to be the main cause of death in the Hsin Hsing area.

DEATH, BURIAL, AND MOURNING

The villagers' attitude toward the rituals and ceremonials associated with death vary for the most part with the age and status of the deceased and the economic condition of the family. An old person is almost always given an elaborate, very expensive funeral which entails lengthy mourning rituals. This is also true for a younger adult who leaves children and therefore has status in the community. Young people and children are given a rather simple funeral unless the family is financially well-off. A funeral ceremony is very rarely held for an infant or child under a year old.

The villagers believe that the individual has three spirits. At death

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

MAGICAL RITUALISM

As indicated earlier in this chapter, magic requires a distinctive type of ritual in Hsin Hsing village supernaturalism. Perhaps the most important single use for magical ritual in the Hsin Hsing area is the curing of illness. As we noted above, the increased availability of Western medicine, especially since the early 1950's, the accessibility of practitioners trained in these ways, and the evidences of their success have turned the villagers more and more away from traditional practices, at least as the major and usually the initial source of help. Thus, the villager now tends to turn to the magical ritual only when he feels that modern science has failed him. However, it remains true that the traditional ritualistic patterns fulfill social, psychological, and even therapeutic functions beyond what is possible for the scientific.

The Diagnosis of Illness

Nowadays, when illness strikes, the villagers observe its symptoms and try to determine its nature. From experience with certain basic sets of symptoms, illnesses are distinguished as being either in the realm of the physiological or supernatural, and therefore requiring a cure within that particular realm. Thanks to the villagers' new awareness of the germ theory of disease, most illnesses are immediately classified as physiological and, therefore, within the domain of science and medicine—primarily modern, Western-style medicine rather than Chinese herbal medicine. Such illnesses as measles, rashes and skin diseases, trachoma, colds, stomach disorders supposedly resulting from bad food or water, and the like, all fall clearly into this category. To treat these illnesses, it is now customary for the villagers either to call in a Western-style practitioner or to choose their own drugs or patent medicines.

There are still a few illnesses or symptoms, however, which are likely to be considered of supernatural origin—caused by a demon or one of the many spirits which are believed to inhabit numerous natural places and objects. These supernaturally caused ailments are best treated by supernatural means. Some forms of insanity, and the frequently unexplained crankiness in children—especially in cases where the child's spirit is believed to have been affected by a "frightening" incident—fall within this area.

It is a commonplace among villagers that "No medicine can help if a person runs into something evil," for example, one of the demons known as *kuei* or *mo shen*. Consequently, when the practitioner of Western medicine is unsuccessful in curing an ailment, the illness is

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

753 755 clearly of supernatural origin and must be attacked by someone versed in supernatural methods—the shaman.

755 There is no particular problem with illnesses which can be clearly diagnosed as natural or supernatural. But there are many cases in 757 which the diagnosis is not so easy or clear-cut. Mainly, the villagers 177 rely on past experience to tell them which set of symptoms indicates 178 which category of illness, and thus which kind of practitioner to call in. Naturally, there are considerable variations among the villagers themselves which may predispose a decision in one direction or the other—level of education, amount of experience, financial ability, and even types of social pressure. As one would expect, the actual availability of drugs and doctors affects choice. In recent years the dependence upon Western medicines and Western-oriented doctors has increased as a result of the increased supply of both at relatively low cost. The ease of access to antibiotics and patent medicines, their effectiveness, and the doctors' record of successes have given confidence in Western science, with the result that it is common today for the villagers to turn to Western methods first for most illnesses.

Many villagers now also feel that it is simpler to call in a Western-style doctor. A shaman often requires the assistance of two or three other people who must be asked in to help in the ritual, at their convenience. Further, when the Western doctor is called in, he charges a fee, and with its payment the transaction is completed. There is no residual feeling of obligation which must be discharged. The shaman, if he is a local one, usually charges nothing at all for his services, and often it is more comfortable not to incur such a feeling of obligation. Then, there are a number of incidental expenses connected with his visit—the cost of sacrifices and the food for all the participants and observers at the ritual.

Having two types of medical practice at one's disposal is not always an unmixed blessing, however, since the decision that an illness is natural or supernatural may be, or may be held to be, influenced by external circumstances. A case in point is the following which happened to a very poor family in Hsin Hsing. The parents were no longer young and already had three daughters and a small son when [553 another daughter was born. Before the infant was named (naming 852] takes place on the ninth day and is, in effect, when an infant becomes human) she became quite ill. Instead of calling in a practitioner of Western medicine, which many villagers insisted they would have done first, the family chose to consider the illness supernatural because the baby was not yet nine-days-old. They called in one shaman, and [967] then another. Despite their efforts, the infant died. Under the traditional ideas the death was attributable to the will of the gods, and the family had done all it could do. The villagers gossiped busily about

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

the event, however, noting that the family was poor and had too many girls already; implicit in their gossip was a recognition that the family may have preferred to have the female infant die.

The attitude of the villagers toward the old and new medicine is a useful example of the way in which practical, external factors can affect "folk" beliefs and values. Here availability, finances, and family circumstances have combined to promote the acceptance of a new body of knowledge. The rural community of the Hsin Hsing area has accepted Western medicine without damage to its value structure or to its beliefs, incorporating the new quite comfortably into the old framework. Thus, when the villager calls upon a Western-style medical practitioner first of all, and the illness is not cured, he can still reinterpret the symptoms and assume that the cause was supernatural after all—perhaps possession by a demon. Then, to cope with the supernatural, he calls in a shaman.

Shamanistic Curing

Probably the most common form of illness treated in this manner is that which the villagers call a "fright" (*ching*). In this "illness" a child or infant does not eat or sleep properly and cries a great deal. The mother may decide that the child "has hit into a bad thing" (*ch'ung*) and that some kind of malevolent demon is causing the trouble. Although she may call in a Western-style doctor, most villagers assume that such symptoms result from supernatural causes and therefore require supernatural treatment.

The many different kinds of charms and instruments at the disposal of the *fa shih* are designed to enable him to bring about the release of the child's soul or spirit. If the patient does not respond at once to treatment, it may be repeated in a day or two or a more powerful *fa shih* may be called in. For the most part, whatever was causing the symptoms, they usually disappear after a few days, and the villagers consider that the *fa shih's* powers have cured the child.

Sometimes in the case of a fright a parent will attempt to effect a cure without the aid of a formally recognized shaman, especially when it appears that the child has been frightened by a definite agent which has caused his spirit to leave his body. If, for example, a dog is believed responsible, the parent will secure some of the dog's hair, wave it over the child's chest, and repeat over and over, "child's spirit return to the child." Or, the parent may feel that the child was frightened by some person. This was the case when a bearded American friend of ours visited the village and frightened a child. The American was then asked to spit into a cup brought by the child's mother. The saliva was brewed with some soup, fed to the child, and incantations were repeated to help the child's spirit return.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

"curative and health-giving powers." Although the villagers of the Hsin Hsing area realize the importance of boiling drinking water, they will drink this holy water immediately after taking it out of the river and claim that they suffer no ill effects.

When the villagers have filled their receptacles, they depart for their own village. The *t'iao t'ung*, who is still in a trance, is carried on the top of a large sedan chair ordinarily used to transport the statues of gods. On his head is a large bandage. Although he has suffered only a superficial wound, the *t'iao t'ung's* actually cutting his head with a sword is impressive to the observers, since the blood flow increases when he dips his head into the water. All along the route homeward other villagers, already informed of the ceremonial, display sacrifices to the god who possesses the *t'iao t'ung* and bring out bottles and kettles in which to receive some of the holy water that is being transported in large barrels.

THE FUNCTIONS OF RITUAL IN HSIN HSING VILLAGE

Having examined the occasion and occurrence of many rites and rituals, we turn now to ways in which they function within the structure of village society and support it. Generally, their most obvious contribution is that participation in the ritual itself helps to relieve the anxiety of people who are desperately seeking to survive in a world of uncertainty or looking for solutions to otherwise insoluble problems. This is true whether the ritual is designed for protection or to moderate natural or supernatural disaster—illness, fire, or demonic possession—since at the very least the villager feels he is coming to grips with the problem. Other results of ritual are less obvious.

Curing rites, for example, resemble all medical practices in having useful side effects or fringe benefits beyond the actually therapeutic. Not only the patient but the whole family must be considered. The Chinese cultural focus on the family emphasizes the reciprocal responsibility of family and individual. Thus, a Taiwanese family must take advantage of every possible means to cure an ailing member or be looked down upon and criticized by the entire community for neglect, which increases the anxiety of the situation.

Therefore, when Western medicine does not work, the traditional-minded villagers turn at once to the shaman, feeling that the very failure proves that the illness is of supernatural origin. But even the skeptical families which have no firm belief in the potency of the magical rituals usually have them performed. This may be partly to avoid social censure, but, in fact, not even the most skeptical are entirely convinced that the rituals are ineffectual. Such villagers have been heard to say, "perhaps the ritual does help. And could one allow

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

them to resort to ritual means. Neither their own nor their neighbor's consciences would allow them to let a member of the family die without the attempt to benefit from supernatural intervention.

It was probably these two factors, social pressure and fear of leaving any method untried, which opened the way for the very notable acceptance of Western medicine in Taiwan. While the skeptic is thus forced by them to call upon the shaman, the traditionalists are likewise forced to call upon Western medicine when traditional methods have failed. As we saw in the case of the baby girl who died, the village did not feel that calling even upon two shamans was a clear indication that the family wanted the child to live; it was strongly felt that a Western doctor should have been called in as well. The general disapproval is not simply an example of the increased faith in Western medicine, but a reflection of a total attitude toward the control of unknown and powerful forces. After all, the microbe theory of illness is often, even in the enlightened West, only another species of demonology.

Many of the functions of the magical rituals we have just discussed are also similar for the religious (*pai-pai*) rites. People look forward to the many *pai-pai* held in the village area. At the very least they offer a change in the daily routine of life. Many of them are occasions filled with thrills and excitement (*je nao*). This is particularly true of shamanistic rituals, and scores of villagers may flock to the scene of the performance. Young boys and men who have worked in Taipei and who, for various reasons, have been forced to return to the village almost always attend such events. These men seem to yearn for something to replace the excitement of the city.

Since community pressures for thrift also have tended to standardize the villagers' diet, even the most insignificant *pai-pai* represents an opportunity to eat better than ordinary food. A village family, unless wealthy, is criticized for eating any but the simplest food on ordinary days. People gossip behind their backs about their extravagance and general lack of thrift. Then, if the family should have to borrow money or need village aid at a future date, people may cite their extravagance and irresponsibility as a reason for refusing them. Thus, even the simplest *pai-pai*, like those held on the first, second, fifteenth, and sixteenth of each month, offer people a welcome justification for eating good food, and the bigger the *pai-pai*, the better the food.

The most obvious functions of the *pai-pai* are often recognized by the villagers themselves. There are several other important functions that the villagers may not talk about unless they are questioned about them.

Although in the process of organizing and administering *pai-pai*

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

neighbors found excuses to stop in the family kitchen to catch up on the latest details. As Masa scornfully commented, "If two ants had a fight, everyone in this village would know about it an hour later." A doctor came to give Chui-ieng an injection of penicillin, the local medical people's prescription for all manner of ills, and, of course, there was a large delegation of Chui-ieng's relatives, including her foster father, her sister, one of her foster father's brothers, and several other people whom I could not identify. Except for her mother, who probably would have agreed to take her daughter home, these people were primarily concerned to see that the quarrel reached an amicable settlement. The mistress of ceremonies in all these proceedings was Ng Kui-lian. With her stick and old-fashioned hand warmer, she hobbled about the house with surprising speed for a woman whose feet have been bound for 80 years. She scolded, cajoled, sympathized, threatened, and within a few hours settled the matter, not amicably perhaps, but inevitably. I do not know all she said to Chui-ieng except that she assured her that if her husband ever hit her again, she herself would beat him up, but I was present when she made Lim Chieng-cua promise that he would not beat his wife again and that he would not beat his daughter when she came home. When she approached him, he was talking to two women from Tapu who had the misfortune that day to come to visit Chui-ieng about the affairs of some distant relative The presence of these two strangers did not inhibit Ng Kui-lian in the least. In fact, she seemed to take advantage of their presence as a means of putting the whole situation on record with unprejudiced outsiders, repeating for them the whole history of the quarrel. She was particularly explicit in enumerating the cuts Lim Chieng-cua had inflicted and the extent to which his wife's face and body were bruised. Even Lim Chieng-cua's sophistication could not withstand the sharp, clinical tongue of Ng Kui-lian. He was writhing with embarrassment, glancing several times toward me as if to say, "How can you argue with an eighty-five-year-old woman?" His only defense was one brief comment. "She knows I have a bad temper and she knows that this subject makes me angry. She brings it up anyway." The next day Lim Chieng-cua made a special trip to Tapu to buy his wife some soft rice cakes. She was having difficulty chewing. When he returned, he took them into her himself, finally breaking his silence with a comment which was probably meant to be sympathetic. "You have bad luck, woman."

000 midwives are invariably females.

757 In addition to the professionals, there are local village amateurs. I cut my bare foot on a piece of bamboo in a rice paddy and it became badly infected. Two old villagers, an unrelated male and female, collected certain grasses in the mountain, chewed them thoroughly to make a soft wet lump which they applied to the cut as a poultice. The wound healed very quickly. Old age seems to be a prime characteristic of local medical specialists (non-professional) who are consulted regularly as experts.

757 Certain diseases and injuries are considered best
759 treated by particular kinds of practitioners. There is considerable agreement on diagnosing and recommended treat-
[177] ment in the village. For example, a Chinese herb doctor is Hsin Tien is best for a broken bone and a Western doctor, for eye infections.

755 In addition to technical treatment, religious worship and sacrifices are regularly added. If one practitioner of a certain type is not immediately successful, transfer to a different type is quickly effected. On many occasions, people will go to two or three different types at once for it is felt best not to take chances.

757 Self diagnosis and treatment is common. Although several older people in Talei Li are considered to have special medical abilities, most adults are amateur health practitioners. Itinerant salesmen leave bags containing

757 a variety of different traditional and modern medicines hanging on the walls in houses. People use what they desire and when the salesman returns he replaces missing items and charges for them although there is no charge if none have been used. Different salesmen provide different combinations of drugs. There are 134 such medicine bags distributed among 59 of the 66 village households.

758 Health care has greatly improved in recent years. People go to a doctor much more often than previously. A contributing stimulus is the care received by miners and their families under health insurance programs. A Western-style doctor, a Mainland army officer, started a part-time practice in a rented room in Erhlei two months before we left Taiwan. Sanlei has a mid-wife responsible for most births. However, in the past five years, a few women in the village have traveled to the hospital in Hsin Tien after the onset of labor, usually returning about four hours after birth. Births in a hospital are common among the women living in Erhlei. The half-hour ride on the bouncing bus with a laboring woman is sometimes most exciting, especially if she has already given birth to several children. On more than one occasion, a woman in labor has gotten on the bus and had the baby during the one hour round trip without ever getting off.

758 844

262 The final factor contributing to improved health and longer life is diet. Fish and pork consumption is at

562 There is yet a goodly distance between the status
562 of men and the status of women. For example, only men are
276 permitted to smoke, a practice which is enjoyed by almost
all adult males in the village. When a boy is able to
[057] earn a man's wage, he too usually starts to smoke. Women
however, are not supposed to smoke and the two Sanlei
women who do smoke regularly are not from high status
families and both justify smoking in terms of its medici-
nal qualities, i.e., it is said to relieve a tickle in
the nose. Other adults also say the two have to smoke
but the statement is often quite "tongue in cheek" as
when one village woman about age twenty-five said that
when she was forty or so, she was also going to develop
[183] nose trouble and take up smoking. The justification is
another instance of the mechanism of avoiding conflict and
refusing to recognize violations of village norms in order
to promote harmony (see Chapter IV).

852 Small children have considerable play time but soon
[23] assume minor responsibilities. Older children care for
younger children regardless of sex and most children make
some economic contribution to their households through
such tasks as gathering grass for buffalo and pigs. Young
girls help mother and boys help father but it appears that
girls have more responsibilities than boys.

562 Given the differential values listed above regard-
882 ing adult males and adult females, adolescent boys face a